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ABSTRACT

In fall 1981, a follow-up study was conducted at the Ohio State University (OSU) at Lima to obtain information from former students regarding their personal characteristics, formal education activities since leaving OSU, and their evaluations of OSU. Survey instruments were sent to a random sample of 4,000 of the 16,000 students who had attended OSU Lima, including students who did not continue their studies at OSU after leaving OSU Lima, OSU baccalaureate degree recipients, persons who received degrees from other institutions, students who enrolled in a small number of courses after leaving OSU Lima, and persons who did not pursue further higher education. Study findings, based on a 9% response rate, revealed that: (1) 89% of the respondents indicated that they would enroll again at OSU Lima; (2) 86% rated the campus as excellent or good academically; (3) rating aspects of OSU such as quality of education, cost, size, location, and student activities, 31% of the students who achieved a baccalaureate degree felt cost and location were the most positive, while 35% of the students who did not receive a bachelor's degree rated location alone as the most positive aspect; (4) 66% of the respondents identified student activities as the least positive aspect of the campus; and (5) respondents tended to feel the aspects they rated positively were more important than those they rated negatively. The survey instruments are appended. (LL)

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OSU The Ohio State University at Lima

A FOLLOW-UP STUDY OF FORMER STUDENTS OF THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY AT LIMA

Self-Study Report No. 7

Institutional Research Series 1981

JC 830 038

Woodford W. Zimmerman
December, 1981

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A FOLLOW-UP STUDY OF FORMER STUDENTS OF THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY AT LIMA

Since the Autumn Quarter of 1960 more than 16,000 students have enrolled in courses offered at The Ohio State University at Lima. During the intervening years, many surveys have been conducted on a quarterly or yearly basis to determine the perceptions of students then currently enrolled regarding various aspects of campus academic and non-academic programs. However, follow-up studies of these former students who were in residence at OSU Lima have been quite limited. Specifically, studies by Vaughan (1971) and McLaughlin (1980) primarily were concerned with retention and attrition, and a study by Zimmerman (1972) dealt with the academic success of students transferring from OSU Lima to the central campus in Columbus.

The present study was undertaken to help fill the void of research data which was especially scant for students who did not continue studies at The Ohio State University after leaving OSU Lima, although all respondents to the survey were not limited to this group. The sample population also included OSU degree recipients, persons who received degrees from other institutions, and those who enrolled in a small number of courses after their OSU Lima years. Persons who did not pursue further formal higher education also responded.

Procedures

Two survey forms were developed to provide data for the study. Form I (Appendix A) was used to collect information, including names and addresses

about the former students. Respondents were asked to indicate their first and last quarters of enrollment at OSU Lima. Also, they were to provide brief accounts of their formal educational activities since leaving the campus.

The second survey form (Appendix B) was designed to solicit evaluative data from the former students. Form 2 was filled out anonymously. Two envelopes were provided for the return of the surveys, although most persons elected to enclose the two in a single envelope, thereby reducing overall survey costs.

In selecting the sample population which would receive the mailing, a chance procedure was used to determine a beginning point in an alphabetically arranged file of student names. A sample of approximately 4,000 names was drawn by choosing every seventh card in the file. Names of currently enrolled students were eliminated at the end of the draw.

A letter of explanation (Appendix C) was enclosed with the surveys and mailed to each of the nearly 4,000 former students. The mailing served an additional purpose in that the availability of the new Associate of Arts degree at OSU Lima was announced and respondents were invited to request additional information (nearly 30 percent of the respondents requested more information).

Survey forms were returned by approximately 9 percent of the sample selected. While the return was not as large as was hoped for, the rate of return was not surprising. First, surveys were sent to persons whose first and last quarters of attendance were as long ago as twenty years. Second, the total file of addresses has not been continually updated, although an attempt is made to maintain an accurate mailing list of the more than four hundred former students who have graduated from the baccalaureate program in Early and Middle Childhood Education, a program which

has been available since 1972.

Responses were received from former students who had matriculated in all academic years between 1960-61 and 1979-80. The distribution of survey participants by year of matriculation at OSU Lima appears in Table 1. Not unexpectedly, relatively few surveys were returned by the group which began OSU studies prior to 1966. During those years, 1960 through 1966, The Ohio State University operated an academic center in the evenings at Lima Senior High School.

TABLE 1

YEAR OF MATRICULATION OF
SURVEY RESPONDENTS

Status/Year	Percentage of Total Respondents
OSU Academic Center at Lima Sr. High School	
1960-61	1
1961-62	2
1962-63	2
1963-64	1
1964-65	2
1965-66	2
OSU Lima (accredited as part of OSU totally)	
1966-67	4
1967-68	5
1968-69	8
1969-70	6
1970-71	7
1971-72	8
OSU Lima (separately accredited by North Central)	
1972-73	4
1973-74	4
1974-75	6
1975-76	10
1976-77	7
1977-78	7
1978-79	8
1979-80	6

Findings

Matriculation Decision. Former OSU Lima students respond much the same as enrolled students have in surveys conducted during the past ten years in terms of the likelihood that they would again elect to matriculate at OSU Lima (Zimmerman, 1981). Almost 88 percent indicate that they again would enroll at the campus. The decisions of these former students to make the same choices as they did earlier appear to be somewhat related to the holding of baccalaureate degrees. Of those having a BA or BS degree, 93 percent indicated that they would make the same decision, while 83 percent of the non-degree recipients stated that they would matriculate again at OSU Lima given the opportunity (Table 2).

TABLE 2

COMPARISON OF THE COMPLETION OF A BACCALAUREATE DEGREE AND THE DECISION TO REPEAT THE MATRICULATION DECISION

WOULD RE-ENROLL	RECEIVED BA/BS DEGREE YES		NO	
	N	%	N	%
Yes	154	(93)	152	(83)
No	11	(7)	31	(17)

When responses to the matriculation decision are analyzed according to the quarter of initial enrollment, no clear pattern emerges. The highest percentage of positive responses was found in the 1960-70 group where 92 percent would enroll at OSU Lima again. The lowest percentage of positive responses is from the 1976-79 group, although the total response is still quite positive with 82 percent indicating they would again enroll at the campus (Table 3).

TABLE 3

COMPARISON OF QUARTER OF ENTRY AT OSU LIMA AND THE DECISION TO REPEAT THE MATRICULATION DECISION

WOULD RE-ENROLL	PRIOR TO SUM 70		SUM 70-SPR 73		SUM 73 SPR 76		SUM 76-SPR 79		AFTER SUM 79		TOTAL	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Yes	111	(92)	56	(89)	55	(87)	58	(82)	22	(85)	302	(84)
No	10	(8)	7	(11)	8	(13)	13	(18)	4	(15)	42	(12)
No Response											16	(4)

Academic Rating. Participants in the survey were asked to rate OSU Lima academically on a five-point scale ranging from excellent to poor. Responses of the total group were quite positive with approximately 86 percent rating the campus as excellent or good, 13 percent as average, one percent as below average and none as poor. The response to this item does not appear to be related to whether or not the former students held baccalaureate degrees, since responses of degree-holding and non-degree holding persons were quite similar (Table 4). In addition, the academic rating given to OSU Lima does not appear to be strongly associated with any particular year of matriculation (Table 5). The four chronologically divided groups displayed in Table 5 agree that OSU Lima is well above average academically. The percentage of former students rating the campus as good or excellent range from 77 percent (students matriculating after Summer 1979) to 94 percent (students matriculating between 1973 and 1976).

TABLE 4

COMPARISON OF THE COMPLETION OF A BACCALAUREATE DEGREE AND RATING OF THE CAMPUS ACADEMICALLY

RATING OF OSU LIMA ACADEMICALLY	RECEIVED BA/BS DEGREE			
	YES		NO	
	N	%	N	%
Excellent	50	(30)	47	(26)
Good	97	(58)	104	(57)
Average	18	(11)	27	(15)
Below Average	2	(1)	3	(2)
Poor	0		0	

TABLE 5

COMPARISON OF QUARTER OF ENTRY AT OSU LIMA AND RATING OF THE CAMPUS ACADEMICALLY

RATING OF OSU LIMA ACADEMICALLY	PRIOR TO SUM 70		SUM 70-SPR 73		SUM 73-SPR 76		SUM 76-SPR 79		AFTER SUM 79		TOTAL	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Excellent	31	(25)	14	(23)	22	(35)	19	(27)	9	(35)	95	(26)
Good	76	(62)	37	(60)	37	(59)	38	(54)	11	(42)	199	(55)
Average	14	(12)	9	(14)	4	(6)	13	(18)	5	(19)	45	(13)
Below Average	1	(1)	2	(3)	0		1	(1)	1	(4)	5	(2)
Poor	0		0		0		0		0			
No Response											16	(4)

A Retrospective Comparison. In addition to the question which asked the respondents to rate OSU Lima academically, a more general question was posed which differed from the academic rating item in three ways. First, it did not limit the former students' consideration to the academic aspects of the campus. The more general item was intended to be a measure of a global or wholistic perception of the campus. Second, the response possibilities differed in that they were limited to four: that OSU Lima was a very good school, an above average school, a below average school, or a poor school Third, the question was presented in two forms: it first asked former students to recall their perceptions of OSU Lima while enrolled and again asked for present perceptions.

To summarize, responses to the more global items were very positive with more than 90 percent of the former students rating OSU Lima as an above average or very good school (Tables 6 and 7). Also, few differences are observed among sub-groups or in the retrospective comparisons. Degree and non-degreed respondents do not appear to differ in responding to this item either. Also, according to the reports of the former students, perceptions do not seem to have changed from the time of enrollment to the present.

Most and Least Positive Aspects of the Campus. The former students were asked to identify both the most and least positive aspects of OSU Lima. Possible responses included quality of education, cost, size, location, and student activities. Additionally, the former students were asked to indicate their perceptions of the importance of both the most and least positive aspects of the campus.

TABLE 6

COMPARISON OF QUARTER OF ENTRY AT OSU LIMA AND EVALUATION OF THE CAMPUS WHILE ENROLLED

RATING OF OSU LIMA WHILE ENROLLED	PRIOR TO SUM 70		SUM 70-SPR 73		SUM 73-SPR 76		SUM 76-SPR 79		AFTER SUM 79		TOTAL	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Very Good	53	(44)	22	(35)	27	(44)	28	(39)	9	(35)	139	(38)
Above Average	65	(53)	36	(57)	29	(48)	39	(55)	14	(54)	183	(51)
Below Average	4	(3)	5	(8)	5	(8)	4	(6)	3	(11)	21	(6)
Poor	0		0		0		0		0		0	
No Response											17	(5)

TABLE 7

COMPARISON OF QUARTER OF ENTRY AT OSU LIMA AND PRESENT EVALUATION OF THE CAMPUS

PRESENT RATING OF OSU LIMA	PRIOR TO SUM 70		SUM 70-SPR 73		SUM 73-SPR 76		SUM 76-SPR 79		AFTER SUM 79		TOTAL	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Very Good	57	(50)	20	(33)	27	(45)	28	(40)	10	(38)	142	(39)
Above Average	55	(48)	38	(62)	32	(53)	38	(54)	13	(50)	176	(49)
Below Average	2	(2)	3	(5)	1	(2)	4	(6)	2	(8)	12	(3)
Poor	0		0		0		0		1	(4)	1	(0)
No Response											29	(8)

Based on whether or not they had received a baccalaureate degree, the respondents appear to differ somewhat in what they believe to be the most positive aspects (Table 8). Those who had achieved the B.A. or B.S. chose cost and location as most positive, with 31 percent selecting each. Among those who had not received a baccalaureate degree, location was selected as the most positive aspect, with 35 percent making that choice. These differences are not surprising and probably reflect the more challenging financial situation faced by location-bound students.

The former students strongly indicate that their "most positive aspects" also were important (Table 9). Ninety-seven percent of those responding said that the most positive aspects were important or very important.

The respondents were much more in agreement in identifying the least positive aspect of the campus than in identifying the most positive aspect. As has been the case for several years in surveys conducted with first quarter students, student activities is identified as the least positive aspect by the majority of the former students. Sixty-six percent of those surveyed select this response. Some differences are noted between the degree and non-degree holders, with degree holders tending to view OSU Lima student activities more negatively (Table 10). Also, persons who had received a bachelor's degree tended not to view cost as negatively as did those persons who had not received a bachelor's degree.

TABLE 8

COMPARISON OF THE COMPLETION OF A BACCALAUREATE DEGREE AND MOST POSITIVE ASPECT OF THE CAMPUS

MOST POSITIVE ASPECT	TOTAL GROUP		RECEIVED BA/BS DEGREE YES		NO	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Quality of Education	60	(17)	25	(15)	35	(19)
Cost	94	(27)	52	(31)	42	(23)
Size	80	(23)	38	(23)	42	(23)
Location	115	(33)	51	(31)	64	(35)
Student Activities	0		0		0	

TABLE 9

COMPARISON OF THE COMPLETION OF A BACCALAUREATE DEGREE AND IMPORTANCE OF THE MOST POSITIVE ASPECT

IMPORTANCE OF MOST POSITIVE ASPECT	TOTAL GROUP		RECEIVED BA/BS DEGREE YES		NO	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Very Important	185	(54)	94	(58)	91	(51)
Important	145	(43)	66	(41)	79	(44)
Unimportant	11	(3)	2	(1)	9	(5)
Very unimportant	0		0		0	

TABLE 10

COMPARISON OF THE COMPLETION OF A BACCALAUREATE DEGREE AND LEAST POSITIVE ASPECT OF THE CAMPUS

LEAST POSITIVE ASPECT	TOTAL GROUP		RECEIVED BA/BS DEGREE YES		NO	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Quality of Education	18	(6)	7	(5)	11	(7)
Cost	31	(10)	6	(4)	25	(16)
Size	32	(11)	15	(10)	17	(10)
Location	22	(7)	11	(7)	11	(7)
Student Activities	203	(66)	108	(74)	95	(60)

TABLE 11

COMPARISON OF THE COMPLETION OF A BACCALAUREATE DEGREE AND IMPORTANCE OF THE LEAST POSITIVE ASPECT

IMPORTANCE OF LEAST POSITIVE ASPECT	TOTAL GROUP		RECEIVED BA/BS DEGREE YES		NO	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Very Important	22	(7)	6	(4)	16	(10)
Important	94	(30)	35	(23)	59	(35)
Unimportant	144	(45)	82	(54)	62	(38)
Very Unimportant	57	(18)	29	(19)	28	(17)

Fortunately, the majority of former students do not perceive what they individually believe to be a negative factor as being important. Of the total group, 63 percent perceive the factor they select as being the least positive as either unimportant or very unimportant (Table 11).

Recommendation to Others. Finally, the former OSU Lima students were asked what their recommendation would be to someone considering enrollment at the campus. Again, the responses are gratifying to persons associated with the campus (Table 12). Ninety-four percent of the respondents indicate that they would encourage or strongly encourage enrollment. Somewhat stronger support is present among the degree holders than among those who do not hold the baccalaureate, but this is not surprising.

TABLE 12

COMPARISON OF THE COMPLETION OF A BACCALAUREATE DEGREE AND RECOMMENDATION TO SOMEONE CONSIDERING ENROLLMENT AT OSU LIMA

RECOMMENDATION TO OTHERS TO ENROLL	TOTAL GROUP		RECEIVED BA/BS DEGREE			
			YES		NO	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Strongly Encourage	103	(31)	53	(34)	50	(29)
Encourage	211	(63)	100	(64)	111	(63)
Discourage	17	(5)	4	(2)	13	(7)
Strongly Discourage	2	(1)	0		2	(1)

APPENDIX A

THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY LIMA CAMPUS

Follow-up Study (1)

Print Name (Last) (First) (Middle or Maiden) Social Security No.

Address (Number & Street) (City) (State) (Zip) ( ) - Telephone

[] Male [] Female Names under which you have been registered other than that listed above _____ 1 2

[] Single [] Married

- Total number of quarters at OSU Lima _____ 3-4
- First quarter at OSU Lima _____ Quarter, 19 _____ 5-7
- Last quarter at OSU Lima _____ Quarter, 19 _____ 8-10
- Educational activity since leaving OSU Lima:
  - No formal education _____ 11
  - Non-credit course work _____ 12
  - Credit course work (no degree received) at _____ Institution 13
  - Bachelor's degree completed at _____ Institution in 19____ 14
  - Master's degree completed at _____ Institution in 19____ 15
  - Other _____

Yes, please send more specific information about

the new Associate of Arts degree_____

For me _____

For another person _____

APPENDIX B

THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY LIMA CAMPUS

Follow-up Study (2)

- Total number of quarters at OSU Lima _____ 1-2

- First quarter at OSU Lima _____ Quarter, 19___ 3-5

- I have completed a bachelor's degree Yes _____ No _____ 6

- Evaluation of my OSU Lima experience (please circle the most appropriate answer)

  1. If I had it to do again, I would enroll at OSU Lima Yes No 7

  2. Based on my experience, academically I would rate OSU Lima as: 8
     1) excellent
     2) good
     3) average
     4) below average
     5) poor

  3. While at OSU Lima I believed it to be: 9
     1) a very good school
     2) an above average school
     3) a below average school
     4) a poor school

  4. I now believe that OSU Lima is: 10
     1) a very good school
     2) an above average school
     3) a below average school
     4) a poor school

  5. The best thing about OSU Lima was: 11
     1) quality of education
     2) cost
     3) size of campus and classes
     4) location
     5) student activities

6. How important was the "best thing" about OSU Lima? 12

1) very important
2) important
3) unimportant
4) very unimportant

7. The worst thing about OSU Lima was: 13

1) quality of education
2) cost
3) size of campus and classes
4) location
5) student activities

8. How important was the "worst thing" about OSU Lima? 14

1) very important
2) important
3) unimportant
4) very unimportant

9. What would be your recommendation to a person intending to enroll at a college or university? 15

1) strongly encourage enrollment at OSU Lima
2) encourage enrollment at OSU Lima
3) discourage enrollment at OSU Lima
4) strongly discourage enrollment at OSU Lima

THANK YOU FOR YOUR ASSISTANCE

APPENDIX C

OSU

The Ohio State University

Lima Campus
4240 Campus Drive
Lima, Ohio 45804
Phone 419 228-2641

Dear Former Student:

Academic programs of The Ohio State University in Lima have been accredited since the opening of the Lima Academic Center in 1960. The Ohio State University Lima Campus was accredited by the North Central Association as a geographically separate operation in 1971. We are now preparing for our next accreditation visit and hope that you will be able to help. This request is not being sent to all former students, but to a randomly selected sample, so your response is very important.

Enclosed you will find two short questionnaires. The one printed on yellow paper may be returned in the yellow envelope. The questionnaire printed on white paper may be returned in the white envelope and should not be signed. You may return both in one envelope. That would save us postage, and you may be assured that we will not match responses in the white questionnaire with names on the yellow questionnaire.

We know that many of our former students have not completed a bachelor's degree, and for those persons we have an important announcement. It is now possible to receive an Associate of Arts degree at OSU Lima. A news release about the degree is enclosed. You also are given the opportunity to request more information about the Associate of Arts degree on the yellow questionnaire.

Please do not hesitate to contact us if you have questions about this research or about programs at OSU Lima.

Sincerely,

Woodford W. Zimmerman

Woodford W. Zimmerman
Associate Dean

WWZ/ce

Enclosures

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